

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A structure for use in attaching a suspension arm to a frame bracket, in which a cylindrical hole is bored in one end of the suspension arm, and a bearing is inserted into the cylindrical hole; a pair of spacer collars is ~~[[are]]~~ inserted into the ends of said cylindrical hole for regulating movement of the bearing; a sealing member is interposed between the spacer collars and the cylindrical hole; and one end of said suspension arm is installed to the frame bracket by means of a bolt inserted through said bearing and said pair of spacer collars, characterized in that each of said spacer collars includes:

a substantially cylindrical tube portion for receiving said bolt therethrough, and
an integral flange attached to an end of the cylindrical tube portion and extending
outwardly therefrom;

wherein in an installed configuration of said structure, said integral flange is disposed
between said suspension arm and said frame bracket, said integral flange having a larger outer
diameter than an inner diameter of said cylindrical hole ~~is formed at one end of each of said~~
~~spacer collars,~~

and wherein this integral flange substantially covers said cylindrical hole.

2. (Currently Amended) A method of installing a suspension arm on a frame bracket, in which said suspension arm has an end portion with a cylindrical hole formed therethrough, said

method comprising the steps of:

inserting a bearing assembly into the cylindrical hole in said suspension arm;

installing an annular sealing member into each end of said cylindrical hole, respectively;

inserting a substantially cylindrical tube portion of a spacer collar through each of said sealing members and into the respective opposite ends of said cylindrical hole, each of said spacer collars comprising a substantially cylindrical tube portion and an integrally molded flange attached to an end of said tube portion and extending outwardly therefrom, said flange having a larger outer diameter than an inner diameter of said cylindrical hole, said spacer collars being provided for restricting movement of said bearing and for protectively covering the ends of said cylindrical hole;

aligning said end portion of said suspension arm with said frame bracket; and

inserting a bolt through said bearing and said pair of spacer collars, and threading a nut onto said bolt;

whereby said outwardly extending flanges of said spacer collars fit into spaces between said suspension arm and said frame bracket and substantially block said ends of said cylindrical hole.

3. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein said outwardly extending flange of each of said spacer collars is substantially transverse to said tube portion thereof.

4. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein said spacer collars are formed of a corrosion-resistant material.

5-8. [canceled]

9. (Currently Amended) A hardware kit for use in connecting a suspension arm having a cylindrical hole formed therein to a vehicle frame bracket, said hardware kit comprising:

a bearing,

a pair of annular sealing members, and

a pair of spacer collars,

wherein said bearing comprises:

a pair of outer races each having a semi-cylindrical shape with a concave cutout formed therein on one side thereof;

a substantially spherical ball having a cylindrical through hole, said ball disposed between said outer races; and,

a pair of retainer rings disposed outside of said outer races,

wherein each of said spacer collars is formed from a corrosion-resistant material and comprises a substantially cylindrical tube portion and an integrally molded flange attached to an end of said tube portion and extending substantially radially and transversely outwardly therefrom, said integrally molded flange having a larger outer diameter than an inner diameter of said cylindrical hole in said suspension arm, and wherein said flange is provided to protectively cover an end of said cylindrical hole.

10. (new) The attaching structure of claim 1, wherein said bearing assembly comprises:

a pair of outer races each having a semi-cylindrical shape with a concave cutout formed therein on one side thereof;

a substantially spherical ball having a cylindrical through hole, said ball disposed between said outer races; and,

a pair of retainer rings disposed outside of said outer races.

11. (new) The method of claim 2, wherein said bearing assembly comprises:

a pair of outer races each having a semi-cylindrical shape with a concave cutout formed therein on one side thereof;

a substantially spherical ball having a cylindrical through hole, said ball disposed between said outer races; and,

a pair of retainer rings disposed outside of said outer races.

12. (New) In a vehicle of the type having a vehicle frame, a bracket attached to the vehicle frame, and one or more suspension arms attached to the bracket on the vehicle frame, the improvement comprising a structure for use in attaching said suspension arms to said brackets, which is inserted into a cylindrical through hole extending through one end of the suspension arm, said structure comprising:

a bearing assembly disposed centrally within said cylindrical through hole;

a first sealing ring disposed in a first end of said cylindrical through hole;

a second sealing ring disposed in a second end, opposite that of said first end, of said

cylindrical through hole;

a first spacer collar, having an inner end and an outer end, disposed within said first end of said cylindrical through hole such that said inner end abuts said bearing assembly and said outer end of extends out distance beyond said first end of said cylindrical through hole, said first spacer collar having a substantially tubular shape with an inner surface and an outer surface, said outer surface abutting said first sealing ring;

a second spacer collar, having an inner end and an outer end, disposed within said second end of said cylindrical through hole such that said inner end abuts said bearing assembly and said outer end of extends out distance beyond said second end of said cylindrical through hole, said second spacer collar comprising a cylindrical tubular portion with an inner surface and an outer surface, said outer surface abutting said second sealing ring;

wherein each of said first and second spacer collars, respectively, further comprise an integral flange formed on said outer end, said flange having a larger outer diameter than the inner diameter of said cylindrical through hole, thereby substantially covering said cylindrical through hole.

13. (new) A vehicle having the hardware kit of claim 12 installed into suspension arm joints thereof.

14. (new) A vehicle having the attaching structure of claim 1 installed into suspension arm joints thereof.